

## Additional Resources

### ➤ Massachusetts Department of Public Health, School Health Unit

617-624-5070 or  
[www.state.ma.us/dph/fch/schoolhealth/shsresp.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dph/fch/schoolhealth/shsresp.htm)

*Provides support and information about school health regulations.*

### ➤ Massachusetts Technology Assistance Resource Team

[www.state.ma.us/dph/fcs/masstart.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dph/fcs/masstart.htm)

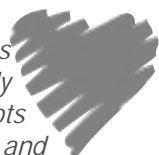
#### (MASSTART)

508-792-7880 or

*A free service that helps families and schools plan for the healthcare and safety of students with special health care needs.*



*Massachusetts Family Voices is a state chapter of Family Voices, a national grassroots network of families, friends, and professional partners brought together by a common concern for children and youth with special health care needs. Mass Family Voices can help you find other helpful material and resources for families of children and youth with special health care needs. Please contact us for more information:*



## MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY VOICES

Massachusetts Family Voices  
Federation for Children with Special Needs  
1135 Tremont Street, Suite 420  
Boston, MA 02120  
800-331-0688, x. 210 (voice)  
617-572-2094 (fax)  
[massfv@fcsn.org](mailto:massfv@fcsn.org)  
[www.massfamilyvoices.org](http://www.massfamilyvoices.org)



Funding was provided by a grant from the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) in Lawrenceville, NJ for the Mass Family Voices project, "Building Capacity for Family Partnerships with Managed Care Organizations." This grant was made possible through a separate grant to CHCS by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

## The Individualized Health Care Plan

*Keeping Children with Special Health Care Needs Safe at School*



A brochure for families of children with special health care needs developed by Massachusetts Family Voices.

MASSACHUSETTS  
FAMILY VOICES

## Children with Special Health Care Needs & School

Parents send their children to school with more than lunches, notebooks and pencils. Backpacks are also full of parents' hopes and worries. Will my child like the teacher? Will he have friends? Will she be able to follow the rules?

When a child has special health care needs, parents have even more concerns. Will my child get his medication on time? Will the nurse know the difference between 'normal sick' and my child's special health needs? Will anyone know what to do if my child has a medical emergency?

An Individualized Health Care Plan, or IHCP, can help ensure your child's medical needs will be met during his or her school day. The IHCP contains information about your child's health. It also lists the person who will be responsible for monitoring any issues related to your child's special health needs at school, on field trips or while being transported to and from school.



## Developing the Individualized Health Care Plan

The most important part of developing an IHCP is good communication between parents and the school. Call the school nurse and make an appointment to discuss your child's special health needs. Try to do this before school starts. This gives the nurse a chance to prepare paperwork and think about questions to ask or information to research. If your child's condition is newly diagnosed, set up an appointment as soon as possible.

The school nurse and your family will work together to develop the plan. The nurse will also meet with the child's teachers to let them know about your child. Parents are wel-



come at these meetings. Depending on the child's age and condition, he or she may also want to attend. It can be reassuring for teachers to meet your child in person instead of just hearing about their medical diagnosis. If your child cannot attend the meeting, bring a photograph or tell a story that illustrates your child's personality and strengths.

## Suggestions for a Successful IHCP

- ♥ Be an expert about your child's condition
- ♥ Be prepared to provide contact information for your child's primary health provider and any specialists.
- ♥ Sign waivers in advance so the nurse can contact your child's doctors directly.
- ♥ Bring as much documentation to the meeting as possible. This may include consumer health information packets, written prescriptions or other doctor's orders.
- ♥ Provide a duplicate set of information that can go with your child to the hospital in case of an emergency. This will help emergency room staff learn about your child, especially if the closest hospital is not where your child usually receives care.
- ♥ Include your child's transportation needs on the plan.
- ♥ Figure out the best way to communicate with the school: written notes, phone calls, e-mail, etc.